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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6448
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5904
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6209
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1450
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4235
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5508
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1656
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3635
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1758
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2817
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001292

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SUBJECT: NEW DELHI OFFERING NEPAL SIGNIFICANT SECURITY ASSISTANCE

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) On June 29, Indian Ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee assured the Ambassador that the Government of India (GOI) would significantly enhance security assistance to the Nepali Police and Armed Police Force. The Indian Ambassador said New Delhi had already clamped down on the Nepal-India border. He also voiced concern about the strategy of the Maoists, but expressed growing confidence in the Chief Election Commissioner's ability to promote a free and fair Constituent Assembly Election.

Security Assistance for Nepali Police

2. (C) Indian Ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee told the Ambassador June 29 that the Government of India (GOI) had essentially offered the Government of Nepal (GON) to do whatever possible to help the Nepali Police and Armed Police Force enhance security in the run-up to Nepal's Constituent Assembly elections in November 2007. Aware of this, the GON had submitted a long laundry list of requests. The Indian Ambassador said New Delhi had begun to review, and reprioritize, the list. Mukherjee indicated that rather than the lethal assistance (guns, even a few light machine guns) that the GON had requested, the GOI was likely to favor non-lethal riot and crowd control equipment. The Indian Ambassador reported that he had stressed Nepal's need for law and order and India's willingness to help with Prime Minister Koirala on June 28. He added that Koirala had implied that he was considering replacing Home Minister Sitaula. Mukherjee agreed with the Ambassador that Sitaula's unwillingness to take on Maoist abuses represented a serious impediment to a free and fair Constituent Assembly election.

Controlling the Nepal-India Border

3. (C) Ambassador Mukherjee related that when Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Kumar Mukherjee spoke with Prime Minister Koirala the weekend of June 22, the Indian Foreign Minister

had assured PM Koirala that the GOI would do everything it could to clamp down on criminals and fanatics crossing over from India to the Terai. However, the Foreign Minister had added that, with a long, open border, it would be difficult. Ambassador Mukherjee noted that the GOI was already taking steps to limit undesirable traffic.

Electoral Weakness Raises Red Flags

¶4. (C) In Ambassador Mukherjee's view, the Maoists had a lot to lose if the Constituent Assembly elections were reasonably free and fair. In a recent visit to Jhapa and Ilam districts in eastern Nepal, he had found that the Maoists were not at all strong. He believed the Maoists knew that their position was weak and that they would lose at least half their seats in an election. (Note: The Maoists have 83 seats in the 329-member Interim Parliament. End Note.) The Indian Ambassador worried the Maoists would pursue other means to gain power and could well be preparing to launch an urban uprising. He heard with interest the Ambassador's story about the National Democratic Institute's discovery that, at least in the mountains of the Far-west, the Maoists had depleted their ranks by deploying most of their cadre to the cities. Mukherjee said he had been assured by Chief Election Commissioner Pokharel that the Election Commission would have legislation with political backing to enforce election rules and to conduct the election properly.

Comment

¶5. (C) It is good that New Delhi has made an explicit offer at the Foreign Minister level to assist Nepal with its

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election and with controlling the border. Ambassador Mukherjee told the Ambassador that Prime Minister Koirala had actually initiated the phone call to the Indian Foreign Minister, possibly because Koirala was looking for exactly the sort of assistance he got. Ambassador Mukherjee is understandably concerned about the lack of law and order, as are we. Indian security assistance will help, but it would be even better if the PM would replace Home Minister Sitaula.

One piece of good news is that Ambassador Mukherjee, who arrived in Nepal in October 2004, is now expected to stay on in Kathmandu until December, after the Constituent Assembly scheduled election.

MORIARTY